

**METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR GENERATING A SUMMARY FROM A
DOCUMENT IMAGE**

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

5 Cross-reference is made to U.S. Patent Application Serial No.
09/AAA,AAA, entitled "Method And Apparatus For Processing Documents"
(Attorney Docket No. D/99632), which is hereby incorporated herein by
reference.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

10 This invention relates to processing a scanned image of a document (for
example a paper document) to generate a document summary from the
scanned image.

2. Description of Related Art

15 There are many occasions in which it would be desirable to compile
automatically a summary of a document. Several approaches for such
systems have been proposed in the prior art.

20 For example, European Patent Application EP 0902379 A2 describes a
technique in which a user is able to mark certain words or phrases in an
electronic version of a document (for example ASCII text), which the system
then extracts to compile a document summary. However, such a system
requires the user to work with an electronic version of the document.
Furthermore, the document must already exist in the electronic form before
any words or phrases can be selected by the user.

25 Regarding the summarizing of paper documents (or scanned images of
paper documents), reference may be made to the following documents:

U.S. Patent Nos. 5,638,543 and 5,689,716 describe systems in which
paper document images are scanned and the images are processed using
optical character recognition (OCR) to produce a machine-readable version of
the document. A summary is generated by allocating "scores" to sentences

depending on critical or thematic words detected in the sentence. The summary is generated from the sentences having the best scores.

U.S. Patent No. 5,848,191 describes a system similar to U.S. Patent No. 5,689,716 using scores to rank sentences, the score being dependent on the number of thematic words occurring in a sentence. However, in U.S. Patent No. 5,848,191, the summary is generated directly from the scanned image without performing OCR.

U.S. Patent No. 5,491,760 describes a system in which significant words, phrases and graphics in a document image are recognized using automatic or interactive morphological image recognition techniques. A document summary or an index can be produced based on the identified significant portions of the document image.

"Summarization Of Imaged Documents Without OCR" by Chen and Bloomberg, in Computer Vision and Image Understanding, Vol. 70, No. 3, June 1998, on pages 307-320, describes an elaborate technique based on feature extraction and scoring sentences based on the values of a set of discrete features. Prior information is used in the form of feature vector values obtained from summaries compiled by professional human summary compilers. The sentences to be included in the summary are chosen according to the score of the sentence.

The above paper based techniques all employ variations of statistical scoring to decide (either on the basis of OCR text or on the basis of image maps) which features, or sentences, should be extracted for use in the compiled summary.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In contrast to the above techniques, one aspect of the present invention is to generate a summary of a captured (e.g., scanned) image of a document on the basis of detected handwritten or electronic annotations made to a document prior to scanning.

In more detail, the captured image is processed to detect annotations made to the document prior to image capture. The detected annotations can be used to identify features, or text, for use to summarize that document.

Additionally or alternatively, the detected annotations in one document can be used to identify features, or text, for use to summarize a different document.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

These and other aspects of the invention will become apparent from the following description read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings wherein the same reference numerals have been applied to like parts and in which:

Fig. 1 is a schematic block diagram of a first embodiment for processing a paper document to generate a summary of the document;

Fig. 2 is a schematic flow diagram showing the process for generating the summary;

Fig. 3 is a schematic view of an annotated page of a document;

Fig. 4 is an enlarged schematic view of a portion of Fig. 3 illustrating extraction of a sentence; and

Fig. 5 is a schematic diagram illustrating options for displaying the summary.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Referring to Fig. 1, a system 10 is illustrated for generating a summary from a paper document 12. The system comprises an optical capture device 14 for capturing a digital image (for example a bitmap image) of each page of the paper document 12. The capture device 14 may be in the form of a digital camera, or a document scanner.

The system 10 also includes a processor 16 for processing the captured digital image to generate a summary therefrom. The processor is coupled to one or more operator input devices 18 (for example, a keyboard, or a pointing device) and also to one or more output devices 20 for outputting the generated summary. The output devices 20 may, for example, include a display unit and/or a printer.

In contrast to the prior art, one of the principles of this embodiment is to generate the summary on the basis of annotations made by hand to the paper

document prior to scanning (or capture) by the optical capture device 14. The processor 16 processes the digital image to detect hand annotations indicating areas of interest in the paper document. Text or other features indicated by the annotations are extracted and used to compile the summary.

- 5 The summary therefore reflects the areas of interest identified by the hand annotations in the paper document.

Referring to Fig. 2, the process for creating the summary by the processor 16 comprises a first step 30 of identifying in the captured digital image, the annotations made by the user. Suitable techniques for identifying annotations are described, for example, in U.S. Patent Nos. 5,570,435, 10 5,748,805 and 5,384,863, the contents of which are incorporated herein by reference. These patents disclose techniques for distinguishing regular machine printing from handwritten marks and annotations.

Fig. 3 illustrates the kind of hand annotations which can be identified typically, which include underlining 32, circling 34, bracketing 36, margin 15 bracketing or marking 38, cross-through 40, anchored arrows indicating place changes 42, and handwritten notes or insertions 44.

At step 46 (Fig. 2), interpretation of the annotations is carried out. The level of interpretation may vary from one embodiment to another, depending on the complexity of annotation permitted by the system 10. For example, 20 simple word underlining 32 or circling 34 does not need interpretation, as the words are identified directly by the annotations. Bracketing 36 and margin marking 38 requires only simple interpretation as identifying the entire text spanned by the brackets or marking.

25 Cross-through annotations 40 are preferably interpreted as a negative annotation, for excluding the crossed-through text from the summary. This may be regarded in one respect as being equivalent to no annotation at all (and hence not drawing any focus to the text for inclusion in the summary). However, a cross-through annotation 40 also provides a way of excluding one 30 or more words near a highlighted word from being included as part of the contextual text (Fig. 4).

Place change arrows 42 and handwritten notes or insertions 44 also require interpretation to identify the respective positions identified by the annotations.

At step 48 (Fig. 2), regions of the digital image identified by the interpreted annotations are extracted for use in the summary. Each region is referred to herein as a "feature", and is an image map of the extracted region from the digital image. In addition, each feature is tagged with a pointer or address indicating the place in the originally scanned image from which it is extracted (or copied).

If an annotation identifies only a single word, or a short phrase, then the extracted feature for that annotation is preferably expanded to include additional contextual information or text for the annotation. Normally, the feature will be expanded to include the sentence 50 (Fig. 4) around the annotation. Therefore, at step 48, the processor 16 identifies the location of full stops and other machine printed marks or boundaries indicating the start and finish of a sentence.

Although Figs. 3 and 4 only illustrate annotation of text in a document, one or more graphic portions of the document may also be annotated to be included in the summary. In such a case, at step 48, an image map corresponding to the annotated graphic "feature" is extracted.

At step 52, the summary is compiled from the extracted features. The summary may be compiled in the form of image maps of the extracted features, or text portions of the features may be OCR processed to generate character-codes for the text. Similarly, handwritten notes or insertions may be OCR processed to generate character-codes, or they may be used as image maps.

During compilation, any further interpretation of the annotations which may be required can be carried out. For example, any crossed-through text can be deleted (removed) from the summary (for example, the crossed through text 40 in Fig. 4).

Additionally, during compilation, identically annotated features may be itemized, for example, with bullets. For example, sentences containing circled

words may be organized together as a bulleted list. Such an operation is preferably a user controllable option, but this can provide a powerful technique enabling a user to group items of information together in the summary simply by using the same annotation for marking the information in the original document.

Additionally, during compilation, parts of the summary may be highlighted as important, based on the annotations made by hand. For example, annotations such as an exclamation mark (54 in Fig. 3) or double underlining may be included in the summary as importance marking, for example, by bold or underlined text, or text in a different color.

At step 56, the compiled summary is outputted, for example, on the user's display or printer.

In this embodiment, the system 10 provides a plurality of layered detail levels in a window 57 for the summary, indicated in Fig. 5. These layers may be applied either during compilation, or during outputting of the summary information.

The lowest detail level 58 merely includes any subject headings extracted from the document.

By clicking on any subject heading, the subject heading is expanded to its second detail level 60 to generate the text summary of that appropriate section of the document. The second detail level 60 only includes text features. However, by clicking again, the summary is expanded (third detail level 62) to include non-text features as part of the summary, such as annotated figures from that section of the document.

By clicking on any sentence, the summary is expanded (fourth detail level 64) to display further context for the sentence, for example, by displaying the paragraph containing the sentence.

In a final layer (fifth detail level 66), the annotation associated with any sentence in the document may be "retrieved" by clicking on the sentence.

In an alternate embodiment the plurality of layered detail levels for the summary may be accessed simply by clicking on each level of detail set forth

in the window 57 shown in Fig. 5. That is window 57 may be used to both indicate a current level of detail being used to summarize a document as well as access a particular level of detail.

In the present embodiment, the summary is based on annotations made to the document to be summarized. However, in other embodiments, the summary may be made based on annotations made to a different document, for example, a previously annotated document or a master document. In such an embodiment, a first document is annotated by hand, and the annotations are detected and stored by the system 10. A second document is then captured by the system, and the second document is processed based on the annotations detected from the first document. In other words, the annotations detected in the first document are used as a guide for generation of the abstract of the second document (in the same manner as if the hand annotations had been made to the second document). Further information about this technique is described in U.S. Patent Application Serial No. AAA,AAA (Attorney Docket No. D/99632) entitled "Method And Apparatus For Forward Annotating Documents", which is hereby incorporated herein by reference.

The invention has been described with reference to a particular embodiment. Modifications and alterations will occur to others upon reading and understanding this specification taken together with the drawings. The embodiments are but examples, and various alternatives, modifications, variations or improvements may be made by those skilled in the art from this teaching which are intended to be encompassed by the following claims.